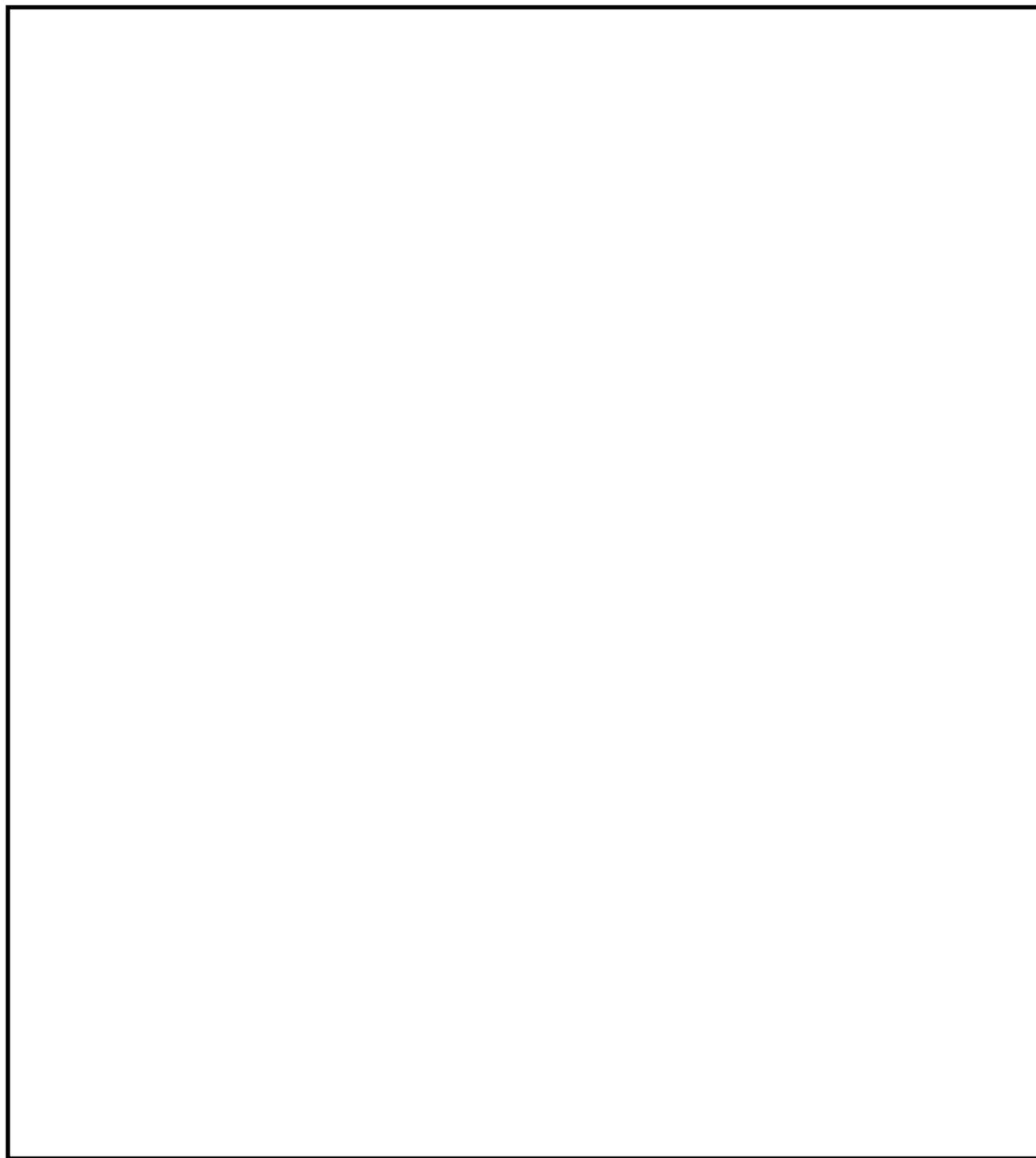


CONTACT

MAGAZINE FOR AND ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE 349TH AIR MOBILITY WING
TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

VOL. 17, No.2

FEBRUARY 1999



SMALL. PORTABLE. FLEXIBLE. LIGHTWEIGHT.

SEE PAGE 6 ...

COMMANDER'S CORNER

by Col. Gerald A. Black

349th Air Mobility Wing Commander

No one ever said that a career in the Air Force Reserve was going to be easy. But it can be a lot of fun. One of the opportunities for an enjoyable time is at annual Employer Appreciation Days. These days offer a great way to show off what we do to people who are very important in our lives. The Support Group has scheduled its day for May 1 (A Flight) and the Logistics Group for May 22 (C Flight). The Operations and Medical Groups are still firming up their dates, so watch for their announcements.

Because we want to accommodate as many folks as possible, we have decided to be flexible about participation. If your boss can't make your Group's date, schedule him or her for one of the other groups' dates. Look for the sign-up form in this issue of the Contact and turn it into your group representative. One way or another, bring 'em on out!

Being a successful Reservist has always demanded a fine balancing act, especially since Desert Shield/Storm. We pride ourselves on being an equal partner with our active duty counterparts. We look the same, we boast the same

skills, and we integrate seamlessly into the framework of the entire U.S. military. Yet we've always had some unique challenges, foremost of which is equalizing needs of family and civilian job with those of the Reserve. Our strategic triad.

What's even tougher sometimes is making sure every member of this trio feels properly appreciated for the hard work and sacrifices each has to make on a regular basis. We try to insure our folks in uniform are recognized with awards and decorations. We try to thank our families both personally and publicly.

Employer flights are the way this wing has chosen to say "thanks!" to the boss. Another avenue for boss recognition is through the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which has the "My Boss is a Pro" program. These are national awards and are an easy and professional way to honor your employer. Ask the wing Public Affairs staff for details. ✈

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANTS' CORNER

by Chief Master Sgt. Anthony L. Maddux

349th Air Mobility Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant

I am very pleased to report that our first 349th AMW Enlisted Workshop was a big success. This

leadership and management workshop was for our chiefs, diamond wearing and diamond bearing first sergeants, primary and alternate career advisors and many other of our "movers and shakers" in this great wing. This was a very special event that I believe was long overdue.

I believe this was also a time for many of our people to finally meet one another. We have so many talented people in our wing that we just never get that opportunity. This is because of the sheer size of our wing, all the geographically separated units, the multiple weekends and the way we now do business.

We spend so much of our time working and doing business in front of a computer, on a telephone, or by correspondence that we often don't get to know the people on the other end of the line. This workshop allowed these people to network, exchange ideas and

information and most importantly get to know one another.

I would like to recognize and thank the many people who worked hard to make this workshop a reality. A special thanks to all the speakers who provided us with so much useful information. Master Sgt. Paul McCullough, Honor Guard Superintendent and his outstanding people who consistently honor our wing with their professionalism and talents. Technical Sgt. Kim Shipley, Staff Sgt. Marc McNeese, Staff Sgt. Mitch Petersen and the many others who made this workshop possible through their skills and dedication.

As we enter 1999, I believe it is important for all of us to do a self-appraisal of our individual contributions to the Air Force and our fellow wing members. I encourage each person who attended this workshop to share this information with his or her unit members. We must continue to work effectively as a team because it will be vital for tomorrow. In that spirit, I am looking forward to meeting everyone in our wing and the challenge of serving you. ✈

CONTACT

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WWW.TRAVIS.AF.MIL/PAGES/349PA**

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MASTER SGT. DENNIS GILB, CHIEF, SATELLITE COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ELEMENT, PREPARES THE LMST FOR CONNECTIVITY TO A SATELLITE. (U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MAJ. (SEL.) ANNE F. MACDONALD)

Family Readiness here to serve

by Staff Sgt. Shayne Sewell

The Family Readiness program has an array of services for reservists and their families. Unknown to many reservists, the Family Readiness Office provides resources and information booklets on preparing for a deployment, leaving your loved ones behind, communication ideas for the family, children and deployment, coping with separation, tips on financial help and how to prepare for the reunion after a TDY or deployment.

Master Sgt. Vincent Lobono, family readiness liaison, 349th Mission Support Squadron said, "It's a program that has been around for four years now but we keep improving it." In a year's time Lobono and Technical Sgt. Mary A. Johnson, NCOIC, family readiness, 349th MSS, created a database of names and addresses of reservists with dependents.

The purpose of the database is to mail the deployment handbook and quarterly newsletter directly to the home of the reservist. "This certainly helps get the word out that we are here," said Johnson.

Do you know that if you're deployed or TDY for more than 30 days your dependents are eligible for all active duty benefits, like medical and dental care?

Reservists who do not live near Travis AFB or within California are still entitled to use the family readiness resources at the base nearest their home.

"We don't have as many services to offer as the Family Support Center does on the active-duty side but we can tell family members where to go to get the information they need. We are available by phone or pager 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If we cannot be reached, the family member can call the Wing Control Center at any time and a family readiness representative will be contacted," said Johnson.

The Family Support Center is not open on weekends, however, reservists are welcome to come in during the week and use any of the resources or services that are available.

They have an excellent job reference center, financial planning information booklets, stress management booklets, and much more.

Joan Bueto, director, Family Support Center said, "Reservists are always welcome and we encourage them to use our facility."

A new civilian employee has been hired to be the full-time family readiness person. "This will help us implement the programs we've been wanting, but just haven't had the time to do," Lobono said.

The new program includes a family readiness package to be distributed at the newcomer's briefing each UTA with an information guide including base facilities and 349th AMW office hours of operation.

"The family readiness office also wants to start a program where two members from each squadron volunteer as an additional duty to be a family readiness representative. They will attend a meeting with the family readiness office on Saturday of each UTA weekend and take the information back to the squadron first sergeant or commander for them to relay at squadron commanders' calls," said Lobono.

Another valuable resource the family readiness office has available is access to a scholarship database where a reservist can obtain scholarships that match job experience, academic achievement and goals. It only requires about 30 minutes to input personal information, school information, and job history information and within minutes a printout gives the name and addresses of scholarships that match you best. The printout also gives the phone number, website, the monetary value of the scholarship and information on how to apply and the criteria needed. It also prints a ready-to-mail letter requesting an application and more information about the scholarship.

An application is also available for the Reserve Forces Educational Assistance Foundation. This is a nonprofit organization established to provide financial educational assistance to members of the United States Military Reserve Forces. The goal is to help reservists defray costs of continuing education by granting awards of \$500 to \$1,000 in the form of scholarships.

"I've always been excited about family readiness. It would be nice to get more input from the reservists and their family members to let us know if our resources are helpful or let us know what they would like to see in the future," said Lobono.

For more information about family readiness, please call Sergeant. Lobono at (707) 424-1661. ➔

Help fight battle for leukemia

by Staff Sgt. Shayne Sewell

“I thought I had indigestion because I had bad chest pains so I went to the doctor. Two days later I was admitted into the hospital diagnosed with myelocytic leukemia,” said Capt. Stacy E. Maskell, 349th Operations Group executive officer. This was June 8, 1998. Maskell is thankfully in remission from her cancer; and, after spending five months in and out of the hospital undergoing chemotherapy, she is training for a marathon held in Vancouver, Canada, May 2, to fight the battle for leukemia.

According to the www.leukemia.org website, acute leukemia is a rapidly progressing disease that affects mostly cells that are unformed or primitive (not yet fully developed or differentiated). These immature cells cannot carry out their normal functions. Chronic leukemia progresses slowly and permits the growth of greater numbers of more developed cells. In general, these more mature cells can carry out some of their normal functions. Thus, the four major types of leukemia are: acute or chronic myelogenous, also called myelocytic and acute or chronic lymphocytic leukemia. The term “leukemia,” which is derived from the Greek words “leukos” meaning “white” and “haima” meaning “blood,” is used to indicate the disease.

“I had no white blood cells which meant I had no immune system. I couldn’t work for five months and I couldn’t be around anyone that was sick. I couldn’t eat fresh fruit or vegetables because of the pesticides and possible germs. I couldn’t even clean my own house because of the germs,” said Maskell. “I asked the doctor what would have happened if I would not have come in to see him when I did. He said I would have been dead in two weeks,” said Maskell.

Maskell underwent four rounds of intravenous chemotherapy. The first round seemed to do the trick but she continued three more sessions of chemo that lasted five to seven days at times, seven hours a day of receiving an intravenous drip.

Maskell had to get daily blood checks during the times she was admitted to the hospital. In between hospital visits her parents and brother took turns flying to California to take care of her.

“The key to wellness is the support of family and friends,” said Maskell. “My parents took turns flying here from Ft. Worth, Texas.” Maskell’s brother, a social aid at the White House, 1st Lt. Dean Maskell, also spent time taking care of her during the five months of chemotherapy. “All through this I had a good attitude. I didn’t get sick with the chemo like a lot of people do. My roommate was always nauseous and getting sick,” she said.

“I’m looking at this whole thing as a positive thing,” said Maskell. “I’ve made a lot of close friends through this. Now I want to give something back so I became involved with the Leukemia Society.”

Maskell has been training with a Sacramento and Davis, Calif., team to collect \$3,000 for her sponsors who have been battling with leukemia for the past five years. “The proceeds help other types of cancer as well as leukemia,” said Maskell. “It also helps in the research for AIDS.”

According to the “Team in Training: Leukemia Society for America” website,

leukemia and lymphoma are the leading killers of young men and women under age 35. How serious is it? Every five minutes, someone in the United States learns that they have leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma.

If you would like to help Captain Maskell raise money for leukemia research, please send your donations to 552 Wicklow Dr., Vacaville, Calif., 95688, or bring your donations by the 349th Public Affairs Office. Please make checks out to The Leukemia Society. This is a tax-deductible donation and Capt. Maskell will mail a donation form for tax purposes to all donors.

The deadline for donations is March 1, however, you can continue to donate after that date up until the day of the marathon, May 2.

If you would like to learn more about leukemia, search the web at www.leukemia.org. ➔

“I asked the doctor what would have happened if I would not have come in to see him when I did. He said I would of been dead in two weeks.”

-Capt. Stacy E. Maskell

FUTURE CALLS FOR STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT

Story and photos by Maj. (Sel) Anne F. Macdonald

Small. Portable. Flexible. Lightweight. The battlefield communication system of the future encompasses all these attributes, and better yet, it's already here.

Travis is one of only two bases in Air Mobility Command – the other is McGuire Air Force Base – that has the state-of-the-art Theatre Deployable Communications system. The TDC includes the Integrated Communications Access Package, the Lightweight Multiband Satellite Terminal (LMST) comprising the Mobile Initial Communications Kit, called MICK for short.

“The Reserve is responsible for 50 percent of the entire mission,” said Lt. Col. Stephan R. Silen, 349th Communications Squadron commander. “Of the six MICKs at Travis, the active-duty 615th Air Mobility Group has three, and the 349th CS has the other three. The setup is the same at McGuire where the 621st AMOG and 514th CS split the mission,” said Silen.

Members of the 349th CS spent A Flight weekend in January familiarizing themselves with the MICK, a sophisticated communications system designed especially to meet the needs of the brand-new Air Expeditionary Force. This AEF concept calls for fewer troops to deploy in a contingency with less support personnel and lighter, more portable equipment.

This apparatus certainly fits that bill. Each kit fits on six pallets, transported on multiple aircraft, which has reduced airlift to a fraction of the deployment capacity required for previous communications systems. These pallets are transported either on a C-5 or on a C-130, requires a team of 22 communications specialists. They are designed to be set up on a bare

Staff Sgt. Rod Robinson, satellite communication system technician, 349th CS, determines signalling level on the LMST.

Senior Airman Tony Albert (left) and Staff Sgt. Allan R. Loucks (right), both communication computer system repairman, 349th CS, analyzes network connectivity.

base that will ultimately support 2,000 users. The kit is a total package that contains telephones, radios, secure cryptographic equipment, satellite reach-back, and computer systems.

Each MICK is totally self-sufficient, which is a must, as the communication teams are usually the first to deploy. “Chalk one, plane one,” according to Chief Master Sgt. Steve Nefzger, chief, mission systems, 349th CS. “A team can subsist on MREs, provide its own perimeter defense, fix and maintain all the equipment, and talk to the world using computers, radios or satellites. We even have some capabilities that the base doesn't have yet,” he added.

In addition to all the new gear, the squadron will be getting bigger. “Right now, we're set up with five 9-person mobility teams,” said Silen. “We will be increasing to three 22-person teams to accommodate TDC.

Obviously, we'll need more people to fill these slots. We'll be sending folks to both civilian and military technical schools to get the most current training. And our people will get hands-on experience here. It's an exciting career field, on the cutting edge of technology. We're working hard with the recruiters right now to get the best people,” said Silen.

The wave of the future is here, and the 349th Communications Squadron is certainly in for an exciting ride. ✈

OPERATION "GET ONE" REVITALIZED

by 2nd Lt. Dawn Young

Currently, one of the hottest issues affecting the Air Force is retention. At Travis Air Force Base the 349th Recruiting Squadron is helping to lessen the possible negative affects retention could have on units.

The 18-person recruiting team, five of whom work at Travis, have many ways in which to recruit new members into the Reserve; and, even more important the 349th Air Mobility Wing.

One effort that has been in operation for many years, and is now being revitalized, is the *Get One Program*. The program focuses on current Reserve members getting friends and co-workers to join the Reserve.

"Everybody knows somebody who could benefit from joining the Reserve," Chief Master Sgt. Roger Buck, senior recruiter for the wing. "Being a member of the Reserve has a lot of positive benefits, and those benefits need to be explained to friends and co-workers of current reservists."

Although the program has been around for a number of years, some people have not heard of it. "This program is a commander's program," said Buck. "What that means is, it is up to the commanders to ensure the program is being actively

used within their respective squadrons. That involvement changes greatly from one squadron to the next."

The 45th, 55th and 82nd Aerial Port Squadrons are leading the pack when it comes to using the *Get One Program* to recruit members. These squadrons have generated 25 percent of the names of possible new Air Force Reserve members submitted to the recruiters. "These squadrons are actively recruiting members," said Buck. "They have even gone out to local schools and made the Air Force Reserve pitch to get names."

To date, the *Get One Program* has netted almost 100 new Air Force Reserve individuals. "We get 25 percent of our new unit recruits from the *Get One Program*," explained Buck. "As the pool of folks leaving active duty dwindles, it is getting harder and harder to draw people into the Reserve. That is why the *Get One Program* is so important."

Anyone who knows of a friend or co-worker who might be interested in joining the Air Force Reserve should call the wing recruiters' office at 424-3111.

"Just provide us with the name and phone number of where we can get in contact with the individual and we will gladly take it from there," he said. People interested in joining the Reserve do not need to have any prior military service. ✈



Maintenance Effectiveness Award won by 749th AGS

by Staff Sgt. Patti Holloway

Members of the 749th Aircraft Generation Squadron in partnership with the 660th Aircraft Generation Squadron of the 60th Air Mobility Wing, won the Air Mobility Command Maintenance Effectiveness Award for 1998.

The 749th AGS proved themselves to be an outstanding unit at Rodeo '98, winning three of the eight awards won by the 349th AMW; Best KC-10 wing, Best KC-10 maintenance team and Best KC-10 preflight team. But the "proof was in the sand" when the 749th helped lighten the load of 60th Air Mobility Wing this past summer by deploying in numbers equivalent to their active duty counterparts in support of Operation Southern Watch to Southwest Asia.

Chief Master Sgt. Gary T. Runow said this award is a direct result of more training and better manager involvement. "The commander, Maj. John Korach, and myself are extremely proud of our people," he said, "We have had a great record in the past, but this has been our best year. With this group of dedicated, hardworking reservists, all I can say is, we look forward to the challenges of the upcoming year where we will continue to contribute exceptional teamwork and distinction in the art of aircraft maintenance," said Runow.

According to Runow, this is the first time the relatively new unit has won this award, having only stood up a few short years ago in May of 1995. This award not only shows that the 749th maintains aircraft effectively, but also that their overall programs, from budgeting to aircraft reliability, are superior. ✈

"We have had a great record in the past, but this has been our best year."

-Chief Master Sgt. Gary T. Runow

COMMISSARY'S \$25 RUBBER-CHECK FEE STARTS FEBRUARY 1

FORT LEE, Va. — Starting Feb. 1, commissary shoppers will face a new \$25 administrative fee if their checks bounce on the Defense Commissary Agency.

Agency officials estimated shoppers wrote 43 million checks to commissaries worldwide in fiscal 1998 — about 71,000 bounced and 22,000 eventually went to debt collection. The new fee is a business requirement recently passed into federal law, and it is similar to those charged by retailers and installation morale and welfare activities, they said. Stores previously levied no fee if a customer made good on a dishonored check within 30 days.

The commissary will collect the \$25 fee when the patron redeems the dishonored check. The fee is waived if a check bounces because of a bank error. An additional \$15 charge can be slapped on a dishonored check not redeemed within 30 days. Customers who don't make good on their own may find the debt deducted from the pay of the military member or sponsor. Military members are liable for family members' bad checks.

Informational signs about the new procedures are being posted in commissaries this month. (From a Defense Commissary Agency news release.)

NEW ARMY AND AIR FORCE UNIFORM CATALOGS OFFERED ONLINE

DALLAS, Texas - Always free to U.S. service members, the new military clothing catalogs from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service are now available worldwide instantly via the Internet at www.aafes.com

The Internet catalog version is designed to provide shopping convenience to active duty and reserve service members who live miles from a military clothing sales store.

Just as in the store, soldiers or airmen purchase clothing record items at the same price AAFES pays the supplier. Additionally, both the Air Force and Army military clothing catalogs have a variety of optional uniform items and accessories from which to choose.

Though identical in product selection, the electronic catalogs do not replace the paper versions, still available in clothing sales stores and stateside through request by calling 1-888-768-3204. Featured in each service's catalog are the latest dress, service, physical training and battle dress uniforms, as well as boots, shoes, shirts, and insignia.

Online purchases require a major credit card or Deferred Payment Plan account. Catalog orders processed by phone or mail can be paid for by check.

Uniforms are a proud part of military life and uniform shopping is a necessity. AAFES is proud to make the shopping part of military life easier.

NEW TRAVEL CARD OFFERS OPPORTUNITY

WASHINGTON - With a new government travel charge card contract, Air Force Reserve Command senior leaders are urging command travelers to use their cards wisely and pay NationsBank VISA by the due date on billing statements.

As of December 1998, some cardholders in the command still had outstanding account balances under the previous American Express travel card program. Reserve officials urge these cardholders to pay their American Express balances in full immediately. The American Express travel card program ended Nov. 30.

Because delinquent accounts reflect negatively on the command and its people, AFRC Commander Maj. Gen. James E. Sherrard wants Reserve commanders and supervisors to emphasize the obligation and importance of closing out all delinquencies as soon as possible. The Reserve will continue to monitor American Express reports until accounts are satisfied.

Under the new NationsBank VISA travel card contract, which took effect Dec. 1, the command has the opportunity to begin the contract with a zero delinquency rate.

Reserve officials said delinquencies under the new program will not be tolerated, and misuse or abuse of the card may result in disciplinary actions. Nearly 47,000 reservists, civilian employees and active-duty people in the command should have received the new NationsBank VISA travel charge card.

"People who were expecting a card and have not received one should contact their applicable agency program coordinators for assistance," said Maj. Joe Ward, Air Staff focal point for the Reserve's travel charge card program.

Members of the command who did not previously have a government travel card may apply for the NationsBank VISA card through their coordinators. If they are not sure who their APC is, people may contact their Reserve financial management office for assistance.

In most respects, the new card is the same as the old one, according to Kathy Earn, command APC. Like the previous American Express card, the new card is for official travel only. Use of the new card for government travel is still about three times cheaper for the Air Force than using cash and offers travelers the convenience of a charge card rather than waiting for cash advances.

As in the past, government travelers have access to cash through automatic teller machines. Cardholders should only obtain cash for official government travel and should limit the amount to authorized per diem.

Command officials encourage travelers to place authorized expenses, such as lodging, rental cars and restaurants directly on the card, thus reducing the need for travelers to carry large amounts of cash. When travelers place travel expenses other than cash on the card, the command receives a rebate from the card company. If you have any questions regarding your NationsBank VISA, please contact your orderly room.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER COURSES GO ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. - Reservists and civilian employees in Air Force Reserve Command can now shop for Professional Development Center courses on the command's homepage.

PDC's Senior Master Sgt. Joe Miller, a curriculum development manager, loaded the center's course information on the World Wide Web this summer. Placing this information on the command's Web homepage streamlines enrollment and makes it easier to update, said Lt. Col. Bill Stephens, chief of the center's professional development and continuing education branch.

On the homepage, surfers can view course information by going to the Headquarters AFRC Directorate, then Professional Development Center, and Courses.

Many of the courses are offered at the Robins PDC facility. They include the First Sergeant Academy and Additional Duty First Sergeant Academy; Air Reserve Technician Managers Seminar, and ART Officer and ART Enlisted Orientation Courses; Academic Instructor School Course; Confronting Difficult Issues; NCO Leadership Development Program Facilitator Training; New Employee Orientation; and Squadron Commanders Course.

Courses not held at Robins include the Squadron Commander, First Sergeant and ART workshops; Junior Officer Leadership Development Seminars, JOLDS-II; NCO Leadership Development Program; and Senior NCO Leadership Program. These workshops, seminars and programs meet at different locations throughout the United States. In January, reservists from the different components travel to Washington, D.C., to attend Leadership - Today and Tomorrow for majors, lieutenant colonels and their equivalents, and the Reserve Component Junior Officer Professional Development Seminar. The International JOLDS meets in Stockholm, Sweden, in July.

Under each course heading on the homepage, people can get the course descriptions, requirements, enrollment procedures, dates, points of contact and other details. For more information on these courses, contact your unit training manager.

ADD A RIBBON OR DEVICE TO YOUR UNIFORM FOR AIR FORCE OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. - Reservists in 17 Air Force Reserve Command units can add a ribbon or device to their military decorations. Units receiving the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for 1998 include: Headquarters 22nd Air Force, Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga.; 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; 440th Airlift Wing, Gen. Mitchell International Airport Air Reserve Station, Wis.; 482nd Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Reserve Station, Fla.; 507th Air

Refueling Wing, Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.; and 512th Airlift Wing, Dover Air Force Base, Del. Other AFOUA recipients are the 310th Space Group, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., and the 926th Support Group, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La.

Squadron award winners include the 439th Aeromedical Staging Squadron and the 439th Mission Support Squadron from Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., and the 514th Medical Squadron and the 702nd and 732nd Airlift Squadrons from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

Other squadrons receiving the AFOUA are the 701st Combat Operations Squadron, March Air Reserve Base, Calif.; 926th Medical Squadron, New Orleans; 932nd Maintenance Squadron, Scott Air Force Base, Ill.; and 953rd Reserve Support Squadron, Norfolk, Va.

If you have any questions regarding your military decorations, please contact 349th AMW customer service at (707) 424-3550.

CONTACT MAGAZINE WINS SECOND PLACE IN 1998 MEDIA CONTEST AWARDS

Contact magazine won second place for magazine-format newspapers in the 1998 Air Force Reserve Command Media Contest. One hundred twenty-one entries from 25 AFRC units competed in the national contest.

EMPLOYER DAY DATES:

SUPPORT GROUP-1 MAY 99

**POC: MAJ. LINDA ORR
349TH MSS
(707) 424-3737**

LOGISTICS GROUP-22 MAY 99

**POC:
MASTER SGT. MARK TROVINGER
749TH AGS
(707) 424-5912**

MEDICAL GROUP-TBD

**POC: LT. COL. MARILYN WELCH
349TH CH
(707) 424-6450**

OPERATIONS GROUP-TBD

**POC: MAJ. MARK KLEINMAN
349TH OSF
(707) 424-1639**

Y2K WON'T STOP YOUR PAY

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Year 2000 computer problem won't affect DoD's ability to pay service members, and troops don't need to do anything special to protect their personnel or medical records, Deputy Defense Secretary John J. Hamre said here Jan. 14.

The Year 2000 problem, nicknamed "Y2K" and "millennium bug," refers to the computer industry's past practice of using the last two digits of years rather than all four — 1999 would be written "99." Old hardware and software are widely used and no one really knows what they'll do on Jan. 1, 2000 — they might treat "00" as "1900." Government and industry are scrambling for "compliance" — assurance their systems will handle the year change correctly.

Hamre said all DoD pay systems are already Y2K-compliant, and DoD will continue to test the systems in March and April to ensure they will work. "It's more complicated than just, 'Will our computers properly calculate pay?,'" Hamre said. "We have to get electrons over to the

Treasury Department. The Treasury Department has to pass on those electrons to the banks. The banks have to spread it out all over. We have something like 800 banks we do business with on a day-to-day basis."

He said the DoD is working with all concerned to make sure pay will continue to flow. He said personnel and medical computer systems are also Y2K-compliant. Hamre said the Defense Department will be able to defend the United States and its vital interests in 2000 despite the millennium bug. He stood by his characterization from last October that DoD's Y2K problem will be more a "nuisance" than a crisis.

"We will have about 94 percent of our systems fixed as of the end of March, and we absolutely will have 100 percent done by the end of the year," he said. As of Jan. 1, he noted, 1,673 of DoD's 2,304 mission-critical systems had been fixed. Hamre said Defense Secretary William S. Cohen energized the unified commands by declaring Y2K a "warfighter problem" and directing them to fix their mission-critical systems. Hamre said the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado Springs, Colo., for instance, tested the aerospace-warning segment of its systems in December. The tests were robust and covered all the dates that system

analysts believe might cause problems, he said. "They found there was no degradation in any of the systems, whether they were in the virtual Year 2000 environment or in the 1998 environment," said Army Lt. Col. Warren Patterson, a Joint Staff Year 2000 official. "Systems operated as they should as far as the data going into one end and out the other, within the prescribed timeframe. It was accurate, unambiguous, clean data. We are highly confident at this point that NORAD can do its early-warning mission."

The Atlantic, Southern, Strategic, Transportation and Space commands will run Y2K tests in February. Pacific Command will begin tests in March. Central and European commands and U.S. Forces, Korea, will begin testing in April.

Commands will test both primary and backup computer systems, Hamre said. He said the DoD is working with NATO allies on millennium bug problems. The DoD has been in contact with 30 to 40 countries, including Russia. He said Y2K doesn't seem so urgent to the Russians — "They have other problems." Still, the United States and Russia will cooperate on building a shared early warning center. Hamre said a DoD delegation will go to Russia to finalize

plans for the center. He said he's "comfortable" that Russia has positive control over its nuclear weapons. "The computer default for failure is not to launch," he said. "The default freezes things up. So we're not anxious that there are going to be accidental occurrences as a result of Y2K for nuclear command and control systems."

The DoD also will participate in U.S. consequence support planning. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will probably be the lead element, Hamre said. DoD will set up its own Y2K command center and participate in Y2K operations in December; there is no plan now, however, to mobilize the Guard or active duty service members for Y2K operations.

"We're not going to know the extent to which and how we should best support the civil sector until we go through some planning," Hamre said. "People shouldn't be anxious about that. We will be ready to support whatever has to happen, but we're not going to know the dimension of that yet for another couple of weeks. Nobody's going to lose their Christmas, I don't believe, worrying about that problem." Hamre said the U.S. telecommunications system is in good shape, as is the power grid. "Will we have spot outages? Probably," he said. "But we'll be able to handle them." ➔

"We will have about 94 percent of our systems fixed as of the end of March, and we absolutely will have 100 percent done by the end of the year."

-DEPUTY DEFENSE SECRETARY JOHN J. HAMRE



**EMPLOYER APPRECIATION
DAY APPLICATION**

To better meet the needs of our customers, Public Affairs has arranged for each of the Wing's four Groups to conduct its own Employer Appreciation Day activities in 2000. Fill out the form below completely and legibly. If it isn't legible, your boss won't get an invitation. The rules for nominating your civilian boss remain the same: ONE boss per Reservist; that means your immediate supervisor, section manager, owner of the store, etc. In short, the person for whom you work who allows you the time to perform your reserve duties. Please submit nominations to your Group's POC for processing. Your POC can answer your questions.

Employer's Name: _____

Employer's SSAN: _____ - _____ - _____ Employer's Title: _____

Company Name: _____

Employer's Mailing Address: _____

Employer's Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ FAX: (_____) _____ - _____

Person to be notified in Emergency: _____

Emergency Phone Number: (_____) _____

Reservist's Name and Rank: _____, _____

Reservist's Unit: _____ Duty Phone: _____

Reservist's Home Phone: (_____) _____ Work Phone: (_____) _____

Please mail, FAX or hand-carry this nomination form to: **YOUR GROUP'S POC BELOW**

POC: CAPT HEATHER CAPELLA or TSGT DAVE MULLET
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Bldg. 239, Bay E
Voice: (707) 424-3737 FAX: (707) 424-3745

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Prior Service: Yes _____ No: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

If Prior Service: What Branch (es): _____

AFSC/MOS: _____ Rank: _____

Referred By: _____ Phone: () _____

Unit: _____

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